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DO AWAY WITH DEANS.

CATHEDRAL REFORM.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD STUART, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF S. MARY MAGDALENE'S CHURCH, MUNSTER
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No disrespect is intended by the following remarks to those who fill the office of Cathedral Deans; it is the office itself, not the persons who fill it, that it is aimed at.

E. S.

DO AWAY WITH DEANS.

THE “speciality” of a Cathedral is that it is the Bishop’s seat, *Cathedra Episcopi*, hence its name ; any Cathedral reform, therefore, which does not take this as its leading idea must fail.

As retreats for learned leisure, as schools for Church music, as nests of sinecure preferment, to attract to the Church those who wish for such preferment, (is that desirable ?) as dreamy monuments of the past, to be visited by tourists and sentimental ladies, as anything but the home of the Bishop, and the head-quarters of the diocese, our Cathedrals must fail to commend themselves to the common sense of a practical age ; how is it then that they have hitherto so little fulfilled their own special office ?

I think the answer to this is obvious ; it is because the Dean has got into the Bishop’s chair,

and when the Bishop goes to sit down in it he finds it already occupied : he has no wish to sit upon the Dean's knees, and occupy his own Cathedral by sufferance, so he withdraws from it, and solaces himself for the loss of his own true home and ecclesiastical dignity, by the superior worldly dignity of a park and palace.

Do away with Deans by the simple expedient of uniting their office with that of the Bishop. As each Deanery becomes vacant let the Bishop of the Diocese become *ipso facto* Dean ; let the Deanery become his residence, and let the surplus income thus arising (from the suppression of the Dean's income and the sale of the Bishop's palace) be given as endowment towards new bishoprics, until we have one Bishop for every county in England.

And when the Cathedral is thus restored to its true use, the Chapter must become a Diocesan Chapter, instead of a mere Cathedral Chapter as hitherto : every beneficed clergyman of the Diocese should be a member of the Diocesan Chapter, and "the Bishop and Chapter" of the Diocese would then be a living reality.

With the patronage of the Bishop and that of the Dean and Chapter thrown into one, and exercised by "the Bishop and Chapter" of the Dio-

cese in common, licensed curates would have a fair chance of preferment, with a large amount of public patronage to look to, administered in a more responsible manner than at present. The patronage of new churches would probably be added to this, and patrons of old churches would not be unwilling perhaps to transfer to it their patronage, for a reasonable sum, to be raised by common subscription through the Diocese, which would then have a common interest in the matter. Should some election or veto be thought desirable for the parishioners, it would be more easily claimed and granted from such a board of patronage, than when, as now, the Bishop's patronage, and that of the Dean and Chapter are looked on almost as the private perquisites of their office.

The four Canons remaining at most Cathedrals might be superseded, as vacancies arise, by four Bishops' Chaplains, with incomes not exceeding three hundred a year each ; their work being to conduct the Cathedral service under the Bishop's direction, and do the work now done by Bishops' Chaplains as well ; appointed by the Bishop and removable by him, the Bishop would then be really master, as he ought to be, in his Cathedral ; and as the Chaplain's office would usually lead to

fair preferment, it would not be an unwelcome one, I suppose, to young clergymen.

Bishops might surely be required to reside six months in the year at their Cathedrals, as justly as parochial clergymen are required to reside nine months at their several parishes; and if the bench of Bishops were happily relieved from their attendance in the House of Lords, there would be no reason why they should not do this. There is a growing feeling throughout the country that we want more Bishops, (one to each county,) and Bishops less richly endowed. "Double their number, halve their incomes, and relieve them from their duties in the House of Lords;" this would probably express the wish of the vast majority of Churchmen of the present day and of other Englishmen as well.

But one thing seems clear, either that a Cathedral must be looked on as a mere monument of the past, or that it must be the home of the Bishop and the head-quarters of the Diocese. A Bishop resident at his Cathedral, with four Chaplains provided for him, and nominated by himself, to aid him in his work; a "Bishop and Chapter" of the Diocese administering diocesan patronage; a Cathedral, the *bonâ fide* head-quarters of the Diocese, these are

reforms which would find a very general welcome among us. Sidney Smith's joke about the duties of Deans and Chapters does but express, rather broadly, the common conviction on the subject: when asked (as being himself a Canon of St. Paul's) "What are the *duties* of a Dean and Chapter?" he is said to have answered, "To the best of my knowledge the duty of the Dean is to give dinners to the Chapter, and the duty of the Chapter is to dine with the Dean!" But if the Bishop of the Diocese were also Dean of the Cathedral, and the Chapter was a Diocesan Chapter, the duties of each would be obvious enough.

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